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UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL

(Only for new nonprovisional applications under 37 CFR 1.53(b))

Attorney Docket No. 05158.P001

Total Pages 3

First Named Inventor or Application Identifier Hui Li

Express Mail Label No. EL143569070US

jc841 U.S. PTO
10/10/00
07/685977

ADDRESS TO: Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Box Patent Application
Washington, D. C. 20231

APPLICATION ELEMENTS

See MPEP chapter 600 concerning utility patent application contents.

1. Fee Transmittal Form
(Submit an original, and a duplicate for fee processing)
2. Specification (Total Pages 44)
(preferred arrangement set forth below)
 - Descriptive Title of the Invention
 - Cross References to Related Applications
 - Statement Regarding Fed sponsored R & D
 - Reference to Microfiche Appendix
 - Background of the Invention
 - Brief Summary of the Invention
 - Brief Description of the Drawings (if filed)
 - Detailed Description
 - Claims
 - Abstract of the Disclosure
3. Drawings(s) (35 USC 113) (Total Sheets 9)
4. Oath or Declaration (Total Pages 5)
 - a. Newly Executed (Original or Copy)
 - b. Copy from a Prior Application (37 CFR 1.63(d))
(for Continuation/Divisional with Box 17 completed) (Note Box 5 below)
 - i. **DELETIONS OF INVENTOR(S)** Signed statement attached deleting inventor(s) named in the prior application, see 37 CFR 1.63(d)(2) and 1.33(b).
5. Incorporation By Reference (useable if Box 4b is checked)
The entire disclosure of the prior application, from which a copy of the oath or declaration is supplied under Box 4b, is considered as being part of the disclosure of the accompanying application and is hereby incorporated by reference therein.
6. Microfiche Computer Program (Appendix)

7. Nucleotide and/or Amino Acid Sequence Submission
(if applicable, all necessary)
a. Computer Readable Copy
b. Paper Copy (identical to computer copy)
c. Statement verifying identity of above copies

ACCOMPANYING APPLICATION PARTS

8. Assignment Papers (cover sheet & documents(s))
9. a. 37 CFR 3.73(b) Statement (where there is an assignee)
 b. Power of Attorney
10. English Translation Document (if applicable)
11. a. Information Disclosure Statement (IDS)/PTO-1449
 b. Copies of IDS Citations
12. Preliminary Amendment
13. Return Receipt Postcard (MPEP 503) (Should be specifically itemized)
14. a. Small Entity Statement(s)
 b. Statement filed in prior application, Status still proper and desired
15. Certified Copy of Priority Document(s) (if foreign priority is claimed)
16. Other: _____

17. If a **CONTINUING APPLICATION**, check appropriate box and supply the requisite information:

Continuation Divisional Continuation-in-part (CIP)

of prior application No: _____

18. **Correspondence Address**

Customer Number or Bar Code Label

(Insert Customer No. or Attach Bar Code Label here)

or

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Respectfully submitted,

BLAKELY, SOKOLOFF, TAYLOR & ZAFMAN LLP

Dated: October 10, 2000

Michael J. Mallie
Reg. No. 36,591

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FEE TRANSMITTAL FOR FY 2001

TOTAL AMOUNT OF PAYMENT (\$) 1,238.00

Complete if Known:

Application No. Not Yet Assigned
 Filing Date Not Yet Assigned
 First Named Inventor Hui Liu
 Group Art Unit Not Yet Assigned
 Examiner Name Not Yet Assigned
 Attorney Docket No. 05158.P001

JCS41 U.S. PTO
 09/685977

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METHOD OF PAYMENT (check one)

1. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge indicated fees and credit any over payments to:

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FEE CALCULATION

1. BASIC FILING FEE

Large Entity	Small Entity				
Fee	Fee	Fee	Fee	Fee Description	Fee Paid
Code	Fee (\$)	Code	Fee (\$)		
101	710	201	355	Utility application filing fee	<u>710.00</u>
106	320	206	160	Design application filing fee	<u>0</u>
107	490	207	245	Plant filing fee	<u>0</u>
108	710	208	355	Reissue filing fee	<u>0</u>
114	150	214	75	Provisional application filing fee	<u>0</u>
					SUBTOTAL (1) \$ 710.00

2. EXTRA CLAIM FEES

		Extra Claims	Fee from below	Fee Paid
Total Claims	<u>36</u>	<u>- 20** = 16</u>	<u>X 18.00</u>	<u>= 288.00</u>
Independent Claims	<u>6</u>	<u>- 3** = 3</u>	<u>X 80.00</u>	<u>= 240.00</u>
Multiple Dependent				<u>= 0</u>

**Or number previously paid, if greater; For Reissues, see below.

Large Entity Small Entity

Fee	Fee	Fee	Fee	Fee Description
Code	Fee (\$)	Code	Fee (\$)	
103	18	203	9	Claims in excess of 20
102	80	202	40	Independent claims in excess of 3
104	270	204	135	Multiple dependent claim, if not paid
109	80	209	40	**Reissue independent claims over original patent
110	18	210	9	**Reissue claims in excess of 20 and over original patent

SUBTOTAL (2) \$ 528.00

FEE CALCULATION (continued)**3. ADDITIONAL FEES**

<u>Large Entity</u>		<u>Small Entity</u>			
Fee	Fee	Fee	Fee	<u>Fee Description</u>	<u>Fee Paid</u>
Code	(\$)	Code	(\$)		
105	130	205	65	Surcharge - late filing fee or oath	_____
127	50	227	25	Surcharge - late provisional filing fee or cover sheet	_____
139	130	139	130	Non-English specification	_____
147	2,520	147	2,520	For filing a request for reexamination	_____
112	920*	112	920*	Requesting publication of SIR prior to Examiner action	_____
113	1,840*	113	1,840*	Requesting publication of SIR after Examiner action	_____
115	110	215	55	Extension for response within first month	_____
116	390	216	195	Extension for response within second month	_____
117	890	217	445	Extension for response within third month	_____
118	1,390	218	695	Extension for response within fourth month	_____
128	1,890	228	945	Extension for response within fifth month	_____
119	310	219	155	Notice of Appeal	_____
120	310	220	155	Filing a brief in support of an appeal	_____
121	270	221	135	Request for oral hearing	_____
138	1,510	138	1,510	Petition to institute a public use proceeding	_____
140	110	240	55	Petition to revive unavoidably abandoned application	_____
141	1,240	241	620	Petition to revive unintentionally abandoned application	_____
142	1,240	242	620	Utility issue fee (or reissue)	_____
143	440	243	220	Design issue fee	_____
144	600	244	300	Plant issue fee	_____
122	130	122	130	Petitions to the Commissioner	_____
123	50	123	50	Petitions related to provisional applications	_____
126	240	126	240	Submission of Information Disclosure Stmt	_____
581	40	581	40	Recording each patent assignment per property (times number of properties)	_____
146	710	246	355	For filing a submission after final rejection (see 37 CFR 1.129(a))	_____
149	710	249	355	For each additional invention to be examined (see 37 CFR 1.129(b))	_____
179	710	279	355	Request for Continued Examination (RCE)	_____
169	900	169	900	Request for expedited examination of a design application	_____

Other fee (specify) _____

Other fee (specify) _____

SUBTOTAL (3) \$ 0

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SUBMITTED BY:

Typed or Printed Name: Michael J. Mallie

Signature:  Date: 10/10/00

Reg. Number: 36,591 Telephone Number: _____

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(Date signed)

Serial/Patent No.: <u>***</u>	Filing/Issue Date: <u>***</u>
Client: <u>Broadstorm Telecommunications</u>	
Title: <u>MEDIUM ACCESS CONTROL FOR ORTHOGONAL FREQUENCY-DIVISION MULTIPLE-ACCESS (OFDMA) CELLULAR NETWORKS</u>	
BSTZ File No.: <u>05158.P001</u>	Atty/Secty Initials: <u>MJM/mb</u>
Date Mailed: <u>10/10/00</u>	Docket Due Date: <u>***</u>
The following has been received in the U.S. Patent & Trademark Office on the date stamped hereon:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Amendment/Response (<u> </u> pgs.)	
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Application - Utility (<u>44</u> pgs., with cover and abstract)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Application - Rule 1.53(b) Continuation (<u> </u> pgs.)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Application - Rule 1.53(b) Divisional (<u> </u> pgs.)	
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<input type="checkbox"/> Application - Rule 1.53(d) CPA Transmittal (<u> </u> pgs.)	
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Drawings: <u>9</u> # of sheets includes <u>9</u> figures	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	

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_____ Month(s) Extension of Time Amt: 1,238.00

Information Disclosure Statement & PTO-1449 (pgs.) Check No: _____

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Notice of Appeal

Petition for Extension of Time

Petition for _____

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Power of Attorney (pgs.)

Preliminary Amendment (pgs.)

Reply Brief (pgs.)

Response to Notice of Missing Parts

Small Entity Declaration for Indep. Inventor/Small Business

Transmittal Letter, XXXXXX

Fee Transmittal, in duplicate

UNITED STATES PATENT APPLICATION

for

MEDIUM ACCESS CONTROL FOR ORTHOGONAL FREQUENCY-DIVISION MULTIPLE-ACCESS (OFDMA) CELLULAR NETWORKS

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File No.: 05158.P001

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MEDIUM ACCESS CONTROL FOR ORTHOGONAL FREQUENCY-DIVISION MULTIPLE-ACCESS (OFDMA) CELLULAR NETWORKS

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

5 The present invention relates to the field of cellular networks; more particularly, the present invention relates to using medium access control for orthogonal frequency-division multiple-access (OFDMA) cellular networks.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

10 With high-speed wireless services increasingly in demand, there is a need for more throughput per bandwidth to accommodate more subscribers with higher data rates while retaining a guaranteed quality of service (QoS). In point-to-point communications, the achievable data rate between a transmitter and a receiver is constrained by the available bandwidth,

15 propagation channel conditions, as well as the noise-plus-interference levels at the receiver. For wireless networks where a base-station communicates with multiple subscribers, the network capacity also depends on the way the spectral resource is partitioned and the channel conditions and noise-plus-interference levels of all subscribers. In current state-of-the-art, multiple-

20 access protocols, e.g., time-division multiple access (TDMA), frequency-division multiple-access (FDMA), code-division multiple-access (CDMA), are used to distribute the available spectrum among subscribers according to

subscribers' data rate requirements. Other critical limiting factors, such as the channel fading conditions, interference levels, and QoS requirements, are ignored in general.

Recently, there is an increasing interest in orthogonal frequency-division multiplexing (OFDM) based frequency division multiple access (OFDMA) wireless networks. One of the biggest advantages of an OFDM modem is the ability to allocate power and rate optimally among narrowband sub-carriers. From a theoretical standpoint, OFDM was known to closely approximate the "water-filling" solutions of information theory that are capacity achieving. Some early work of Hirosaki, "An Orthogonally Multiplexed QAM System Using the Discrete Fourier Transform," IEEE Trans. Communications, vol. 29, Jul. 1981, pp. 982-989, based on an FFT implementation of OFDM achieved complexity and decoded bit count that was comparable to single-carrier counterparts. This inherent potential of OFDM achieved fruition in the design of discrete multi-tone systems (DMT) for xDSL/ADSL applications pioneered by J. Cioffi et al., "A discrete multi-tone transceiver system for HDSL applications," IEEE Journal on Selected Areas in Communications, vol. 9, no. 6 Aug 1991, pp 909-91.

OFDMA allows for multi-access capability to serve increasing number of subscribers. In OFDMA, one or a cluster OFDM sub-carriers defines a “traffic channel”, and different subscribers access to the base-station simultaneously by using different traffic channels. For more

5 information, see Cheng and Verdu, “Gaussian multiaccess channels with ISI: Capacity region and multiuser water-filling,” IEEE Trans. Info. Theory, Vol. 39(3), pp 773–785, May 1993; Tse and Hanly, “Multiaccess fading channels - part I: Polymatriod structure, optimal resource allocation and throughput capacities,” IEEE Trans. Info. Theory, Vol. 44(7), pp 2796–2815, November

10 1998; and Wong et al., “Multiuser OFDM with adaptive subcarrier, bit and power allocation,” IEEE J. Select. Areas Commun., Vol. 17(10), pp 1747–1758, October 1999. These references indicate that there is a problem for multi-user communications and show that a full extent of centralized resource allocation in the context of OFDMA can substantially increase the capacity of

15 a wireless network.

Existing approaches for wireless traffic channel assignment are subscriber-initiated and single-subscriber (point-to-point) in nature. Since the total throughput of a multiple-access network depends on the channel fading profiles, noise-plus-interference levels, and in the case of spatially

separately transceivers, the spatial channel characteristics, of all active subscribers, distributed or subscriber-based channel loading approaches as fundamentally sub-optimum. Furthermore, subscriber-initiated loading algorithms are problematic when multiple transceivers are employed as the

5 base-station, since the signal-to-noise-plus-interference ratio (SINR) measured based on an omni-directional sounding signal does not reveal the actual quality of a particular traffic channel with spatial processing gain. In other words, a “bad” traffic channel measured at the subscriber based on the omni-directional sounding signal may very well be a “good” channel with

10 proper spatial beamforming from the base-station. For these two reasons, innovative information exchange mechanisms and channel assignment and loading protocols that account for the (spatial) channel conditions of all accessing subscribers, as well as their QoS requirements, are highly desirable. Such “spatial-channel-and-QoS-aware” allocation schemes can

15 considerably increase the spectral efficiency and hence data throughput in a given bandwidth. Thus, distributed approaches, i.e., subscriber-initiated assignment are thus fundamentally sub-optimum.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

A method and apparatus for controlling OFDMA cellular networks is described. In one embodiment, the method comprises receiving channel characteristics and noise-plus-interference information measured at spatially distributed subscribers and assigning traffic channels for an orthogonal frequency-division multiple-access (OFDMA) network.

5

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The present invention will be understood more fully from the detailed description given below and from the accompanying drawings of various embodiments of the invention, which, however, should not be taken

5 to limit the invention to the specific embodiments, but are for explanation and understanding only.

Figure 1 is a block diagram of one embodiment of a multiple access wireless network with a base-station and multiple subscribers.

10

Figure 2 shows different propagation conditions resulting in different channel responses in the frequency domain for different subscribers.

15 Figure 3 shows an exemplary channel allocation of the OFDMA spectrum with joint channel assignment for a pair of users.

Figure 4 is a flow diagram of one embodiment of a basic traffic channel assignment process between a base-station and multiple subscribers.

20

Figure 5 is a block diagram of one embodiment of a subscriber.

Figure 6 is a block diagram of one embodiment of a base-station.

Figure 7 shows the beam-pattern of omni-directional sounding signal

5 and the beam-pattern of directional transmission and reception.

Figure 8 shows an exemplary frame structure for use during link initiation.

10 Figure 9 shows base-stations in a multi-cell network to perform joint traffic channel allocation.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PRESENT INVENTION

A protocol for allocating channels is described. In the following description, numerous details are set forth to provide a thorough understanding of the present invention. It will be apparent, however, to one skilled in the art, that the present invention may be practiced without these specific details. In other instances, well-known structures and devices are shown in block diagram form, rather than in detail, in order to avoid obscuring the present invention.

Some portions of the detailed descriptions which follow are presented in terms of algorithms and symbolic representations of operations on data bits within a computer memory. These algorithmic descriptions and representations are the means used by those skilled in the data processing arts to most effectively convey the substance of their work to others skilled in the art. An algorithm is here, and generally, conceived to be a self-consistent sequence of steps leading to a desired result. The steps are those requiring physical manipulations of physical quantities. Usually, though not necessarily, these quantities take the form of electrical or magnetic signals capable of being stored, transferred, combined, compared, and otherwise manipulated. It has proven convenient at times, principally for

reasons of common usage, to refer to these signals as bits, values, elements, symbols, characters, terms, numbers, or the like.

It should be borne in mind, however, that all of these and similar terms are to be associated with the appropriate physical quantities and are

5 merely convenient labels applied to these quantities. Unless specifically stated otherwise as apparent from the following discussion, it is appreciated that throughout the description, discussions utilizing terms such as "processing" or "computing" or "calculating" or "determining" or "displaying" or the like, refer to the action and processes of a computer

10 system, or similar electronic computing device, that manipulates and transforms data represented as physical (electronic) quantities within the computer system's registers and memories into other data similarly represented as physical quantities within the computer system memories or registers or other such information storage, transmission or display devices.

15 The present invention also relates to apparatus for performing the operations herein. This apparatus may be specially constructed for the required purposes, or it may comprise a general purpose computer selectively activated or reconfigured by a computer program stored in the computer. Such a computer program may be stored in a computer readable

storage medium, such as, but is not limited to, any type of disk including floppy disks, optical disks, CD-ROMs, and magnetic-optical disks, read-only memories (ROMs), random access memories (RAMs), EPROMs, EEPROMs, magnetic or optical cards, or any type of media suitable for storing electronic
5 instructions, and each coupled to a computer system bus.

The algorithms and displays presented herein are not inherently related to any particular computer or other apparatus. Various general purpose systems may be used with programs in accordance with the teachings herein, or it may prove convenient to construct more specialized
10 apparatus to perform the required method steps. The required structure for a variety of these systems will appear from the description below. In addition, the present invention is not described with reference to any particular programming language. It will be appreciated that a variety of programming languages may be used to implement the teachings of the
15 invention as described herein.

A machine-readable medium includes any mechanism for storing or transmitting information in a form readable by a machine (e.g., a computer). For example, a machine-readable medium includes read only memory ("ROM"); random access memory ("RAM"); magnetic disk storage media;

optical storage media; flash memory devices; electrical, optical, acoustical or other form of propagated signals (e.g., carrier waves, infrared signals, digital signals, etc.); etc.

5 OVERVIEW

A medium access control protocol is described that centralizes broadband channel characteristics and noise-plus-interference information measured at spatially distributed subscribers and assigns traffic channels for orthogonal frequency-division multiple-access (OFDMA) network. In one 10 embodiment, the assignment is made using spatial multiplexing (beamforming).

In one embodiment, the medium access control protocol controls channel information feedback from multiple subscribers to the base-station, estimates spatial processing gains for both uplink (subscriber to base-station) 15 and downlink (base-station to subscriber) communications, and performs joint traffic channel assignment.

In one embodiment, a base-station in a wireless network collects broadband channel and noise-plus-interference information measured at multiple subscribers, estimates space-time-frequency diversity gains

afforded by spatially separated antennas at the base-station, determines the uplink and downlink OFDMA traffic channel conditions, and jointly assigns traffic channels to needed subscribers. The assignment may be made to substantially increase the network throughput.

- 5 In one embodiment, standby subscribers initially listen to an omnidirectional sounding signal broadcast by a base-station in the cell network. The sounding signal may comprise a signal having a data sequence known to the base-station and the subscribers. Each subscriber estimates channel gains and noise-plus-interference levels of a set of OFDMA traffic channels.
- 10 In one embodiment, the set of OFDMA traffic channels are different for different subscribers. When one or more subscribers are paged or when one or more subscribers have packets to transmit to the base-station, such subscribers transmit measured channel and noise-plus-interference information to the base-station through pre-allocated access channels. Those
- 15 subscribers with links to the base-station already allocated need not resend their information unless the base-station is performing retraining (globally reallocating). The access channels are preallocated by the base station.

 The base-station demodulates the access signals and estimates the broadband spatial processing gains across all available OFDMA traffic

channels for each of the accessing subscribers (subscribers sending or desiring to send information to the base station). The results, together with the feedback channel and noise-plus-interference information, are used to determine the optimum set of uplink and downlink traffic channels for

5 accessing and/or ongoing subscribers.

A subscriber unit that communicates with a base-station using OFDMA is also disclosed. In one embodiment, the subscriber unit includes a channel and noise-plus-interference estimator, an access signal generator, and an OFDM modem. The channel and noise-plus-interference estimator

10 estimates channel gains and noise-plus-interference levels in a pre-determined set of traffic channels, possibly announced by the base-station. This information is the SINRs corresponding to the pre-determined set of traffic channels. The predetermined set of channels may comprise all the channels or some portion of channels. The portion of channels may be the

15 even channels, odd channels, every i th channel (where i is an integer from 3 or above, such that the portion of channels comprises every 3rd channel, or every 4th channel, etc.), or a number of channels that are not selected from a regular pattern such as every i th channel.

The access signal generator encodes the channel and noise-plus-interference information to form an access signal. The OFDM modem modulates the access signal and transmits the modulated signal through an access channel. The access channel is comprised of all or a subset of traffic channels during an access time slot. The accessing signal from the subscriber is used by the base-station to perform spatial channel and spatial processing gain estimation for all or a subset of traffic channels and traffic channel assignment.

5

A base-station that communicates with multiple subscribers using OFDMA protocol is also disclosed. In one embodiment, the base-station includes one or more spatially separated transceivers, an access signal detector and demodulator, a broadband spatial channel and spatial gain estimator, an uplink and downlink signal-to-noise-plus-interference calculator, a multi-user traffic channel allocator, and an OFDM modem. The access signal detector and demodulator detects access signals transmitted from subscribers and demodulates the feedback channel gain and noise-plus-interference information measured at the subscribers. Based on the received accessing signals, the spatial channel and spatial gain estimator estimates the broadband spatial channel, i. e., the spatial characteristics of all

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or a subset of traffic channel, between the base-station and each of the accessing subscribers. The broadband spatial channel estimates, together with the measured channel and noise-plus-interference information feedback from the access subscribers, are used by the multi-user traffic

- 5 channel allocator to determine a traffic channel assignment and code and modulation combination for each of the accessing subscribers.

The coding and modulation scheme may be selected based on the SINR values. For example,

- if $\text{SINR} \geq 6 \text{ dB}$: QPSK with 1/2 coding, yielding 1 bit/sec/HZ
- 10 if $\text{SINR} \geq 12 \text{ dB}$: 16QAM with 3/4 coding, yielding 3 bits/sec/HZ, where the fractional numbers refer to code rates (= # of information bits/# of coded bits). Therefore, 1/2 coding means that 1 information bit generates 2 coded bits, adding 100% redundancy. For example, if one wants to transmit 100 bits over wireless link, one first codes them (adding 100% redundancy)
- 15 and generates 200 coded bits, then modulates the 200 bits using QPSK. At the receiver side, the decoder removes the redundancy and recovers the 100 information bits. The 3/4 coding simply means 3 information bits generates 4 coded bits (33% redundancy).

The OFDM modem modulates the decision regarding traffic channel assignments and code and modulation combinations and transmits the modulated decision to the subscribers. The modulated decision may comprise a channel index or channel indices for channels allocated to the

5 subscriber or an indication of the same (e.g., a compressed version of a channel index, bit pattern indicative of the channel to be used or not to be used, etc.).

For the spatial channel and spatial gain estimator, a process for estimating uplink and downlink spatial gains from the access signals, in

10 conjunction with the channel and noise-plus-interference information feedback from the subscribers, is disclosed. The process may be performed by processing logic that comprises hardware (e.g., dedicated logic), software (such as that which runs on a general purpose computer or on a dedicated machine), or a combination of both. In one embodiment, the process

15 includes processing logic that first estimates the broadband spatial channels across all or a pre-specified set of OFDMA traffic channels for each accessing subscriber based on the accessing channel received. The results determine the uplink and downlink “spatial processing” gain on each of the OFDMA traffic channels. Processing logic adds the spatial processing gain to the

downlink signal strength feedback (e.g., the channel and noise-plus-interference information) from the subscriber to predict the signal to noise-plus-interference ratio (SINR) for uplink and downlink transmission with spatial processing (e.g., beamforming) over each of the available OFDMA traffic channels. The available OFDMA traffic channels may comprise all the traffic channels or may comprise all or some portion of the unused traffic channels. Using the SINRs values for all active subscribers and accessing subscribers, processing logic determines a traffic channel assignment. In one embodiment, such a traffic channel assignment may be the optimum traffic channel assignment.

In another embodiment, the protocol for channel assignment incorporates priority (based on, for example, an amount of money paid by the subscriber) and QoS requirements. In one such embodiment, the base-station first estimates the uplink and downlink SINRs across all OFDMA traffic channels for all active (subscriber already linked to the base-station but not currently transmitting) and accessing subscribers, while factoring in the QoS requirements (e.g., data rate (e.g., buffer size), time-out, bit error rate, waiting time (how long the subscriber has been waiting)) to determine the optimum traffic channel allocation. Such information may be combined

in a weighted fashion. For example, in one embodiment, a gain may be combined with weighted buffer size and time out requests.

In another embodiment, the protocol for channel assignment that involves multiple base-stations is disclosed. In such an embodiment, in a

- 5 multi-cell environment, the base-station within each cell first estimates the uplink and downlink SINRs across all OFDMA traffic channels for all active and accessing subscribers. Each base-station may also buffer the QoS requirements (e.g., data rate, time-out, bit error rate, waiting time). Base-stations in neighboring cells exchange such information before performing a
- 10 traffic channel allocation jointly for multiple subscribers.

Thus, the present invention may be used to answer a primary challenge for next generation wireless networks by supporting integrated multimedia type traffic over a unified network platform. Also, given the stringent constraints on bandwidth, power and cost relative to increasing

- 15 end-user expectations, design optimization approaches described herein for the air interface (involving multiple access/modem issues) exploit space-time-frequency resources and yet provide a feasible low-cost/low-power solution to mobility support is a critical imperative.

OFDMA with Multi-User Uploading

Orthogonal frequency-division multiplexing (OFDM) is a form of modulation that transmits high-speed data via multiple parallel traffic channels. In broadband applications where the communication channels are

5 frequency selective, OFDM is known to closely approximate the "water-filling" solutions of information theory that are capacity-achieving via appropriate power-per-bit allocations to each sub-carrier.

For wireless systems with multiple subscribers, many existing schemes combine OFDM with static time-division multiple access (TDMA),

10 and handle multiple-access by letting users communicate with the base-station in separate time slot(s). Within each time slot, OFDM with water-filling can be employed to maximize the capacity. While the OFDM/TDMA scheme offers a capacity increase over the conventional TDMA scheme with fixed modulation, channel adaptation here is limited to single-user loading.

15 Notice that in point-to-point OFDM, narrowband traffic channels (sub-carriers) that experience deep fade are wasted because they are not power-efficient to carry any information bit. However in a multiple-access environment, this portion of sub-carriers is unlikely to be in deep fade for all users. Figure 1 illustrates broadband channel fading patterns that are

dramatically different from one subscriber to the other. From a theoretical viewpoint, an orthogonal frequency-division multiple access (OFDMA) that allows simultaneous data transmission from multiple subscribers over different traffic channels can offer a substantially larger capacity increase

5 over OFDM/TDMA. To achieve such gain however, coordination between the base-station and subscribers is of paramount importance.

Protocols for Centralized Channel Assignment

In one embodiment, the broadband channel characteristics of each

10 subscriber, as well as the noise-plus-interference experienced across all OFDMA traffic channels, are known to the base-station for joint uplink and downlink traffic channel allocation. Secondly, if the spatial diversity afforded by base-station antenna array is to be exploited at the base-station, as done in almost all wireless networks, an additional information exchange

15 is required to estimate the downlink channel characteristics associated with each subscriber. This is because before a wireless link is established, only sounding signals transmitted omni-directional from the base-station can be detected by stand by subscribers. Channel characteristics or signal strengths estimated at the subscriber based on the sounding signals do not reflect the

actual downlink channel conditions after spatial processing is applied.

Thirdly, each subscriber is subject to interference from neighboring cells in a multi-cell setup. To increase, and potentially maximize, the spectral efficiency for ever-changing traffic, coordination among base-stations and

5 subscribers is considered in traffic channel assignment.

Figure 2 illustrates that the channel gain for different channels changes based on the subcarrier being examined. For example, while channels 1 and 2 has good gain at certain subchannels, they also have poorer gains at others. The present invention makes intelligent decisions about

10 channel assignments for multi-users so that multiple channels are jointly allocated to multiple subscribers based on which channels have desirable characteristics (e.g., higher gains, lower interference, etc.) for each particular subscriber. Figure 3 illustrates the performance of multiple sub carriers (channels) for two users, user 1 and user 2, and the resulting allocation for

15 those users based, at least in part, on the channel conditions.

Figure 4 illustrates one embodiment of an MAC protocol. Referring to Figure 4, standby subscribers, e.g., subscriber #i, listens to an omni-directional sounding signal 401 broadcast from the base-station. In one embodiment, sounding signal 401 is transmitted periodically, and through

all or a majority of OFDMA traffic channels. Based on the known sounding signal pattern, the subscriber estimates the channel gains at each of the OFDMA traffic channel. The subscriber also estimates the noise-plus-interference information in a similar fashion using signal processing

- 5 techniques such as, for example, maximum likelihood channel and noise parameter estimation algorithms, FFT-based channel gain and noise-plus-interference power estimators, and decision directed channel estimation algorithms.

Until the subscriber has packets to transmit, or when it is paged by

- 10 the base-station, the subscriber continues updating its channel and noise-plus-interference estimates based on new sounding signals received. Once paged or when it has packets to transmit, the subscriber encodes the estimated channel and noise-plus-interference information corresponding to all or a part of the OFDMA traffic channels into an access signal. The
- 15 subscriber knows, prior to encoding, the OFDMA channels for which to encode information. The access signal is transmitted to the base-station through one or more access channels within a dedicated access time slot, such as with signal 402. Each access channel may consist of all OFDMA traffic channels or a subset of OFDMA traffic channels across the spectrum.

During this processing, other standby subscribers, e.g., subscriber #j, performs the same operations and may transmit another access signal, such as signal 403, through the same or different access channel to the base-station. In some cases, multiple access signals may collide on a particular

5 access channel. The base-station may resolve both access signals using multi-user detection techniques well-known in the art.

Once the access signal(s) are received, the base-station estimates the uplink and downlink SINRs corresponding to the OFDMA traffic channels being allocated for accessing subscribers. If antenna arrays are employed at

10 the base-station, accessing signals are also used for estimating uplink and downlink broadband spatial gains, which determine the uplink and downlink SINRs of OFDMA traffic channels.

The base-station then performs joint traffic channel assignment, based on subscribers' channel and noise-plus-interference characteristics, and

15 broadband spatial gains provided that spatially separated antennas are employed at the base-station. Other factors, such as, for example, subscribers' data rates, time-off limitations, waiting time, buffer status, service type (voice, video, email, multi-media) and other QoS requirements, may be considered in conjunction with the channel and noise-plus-

interference characteristics to perform joint traffic channel assignment. The decision is sent back, using signal 404, for example, to accessing and/or ongoing subscriber(s) at a pre-determined time to initial or update wireless links. The determination of when to update the information and repeat the allocation process depends upon the mobility of the subscribers. For subscribers that move frequently, reallocation may occur more often.

5

Figure 5 is a block diagram of one embodiment of a subscriber.

Referring to Figure 5, subscriber 500 comprises a receiving antenna (array) and RF receivers 501, storage 502 for received base-band sounding signal, an 10 OFDM demodulator 503, a channel and noise-plus-interference estimator 504, a subscriber information register 506, an encoder 505, a serial-to-parallel converter 507, an OFDM modulator 508, RF transmitter(s) and transmission antenna(s) 509.

Sounding signals received at receiving antenna(s) 501A are down-15 converted to base-band by RF receiver(s) 501B. The down-converted sounding signals are stored in storage 502 for processing.

OFDM demodulator 503 demodulates data information embedded in the sounding signals. The demodulated information, along with the raw sounding signals stored, is forwarded to channel and noise-plus-interference

estimator 504 for channel and noise-plus-interference estimation. Estimator 504 formats the estimated information into, for example, the signal-to-noise-plus-interference ratios, and together with the subscriber's information (e.g., subscriber ID information; requested data rate, etc.) from the subscriber 5 information register 506, forwards the information to encoder 505.

Encoder 505 encodes the information and passes it to a serial to parallel converter 507, which converts the data from serial to parallel. The parallel data is then sent to OFDM modulator 508, which modulates the data. The output of OFDM modulator 508 forms an encoded accessing 10 signal, which is then up-converted by the RF transmitter(s) 509A and transmitted out through the transmission antenna (array) 509B.

Figure 6 is a block diagram of one embodiment of a base-station. Referring to Figure 6, base-station 600 includes a receiving antenna (array) 601, storage 602 for uplink accessing signals, an OFDM demodulator 603, a 15 broadband channel and noise-plus-interference estimator 604, a traffic channel register and storage 606 for estimated channel and noise-plus-interference characteristics, a joint traffic channel allocator 605A, a feedback signal generator 605B, a downlink data stream interface 608, an OFDM

modulator 607, a RF transmitter (array) 609B and a transmitting antenna (array) 609A.

Uplink signals from subscribers, including accessing signals, are received by receiving antenna (array) 609A and down-converted to base-

- 5 band by RF receiver(s) 609B. The accessing signals received during the dedicated access time slot are stored in storage 602. The row accessing signals are fed to a broadband channel and noise-plus-interference estimator 604, which, together with OFDM demodulator 603, estimates the broadband channel and noise-plus-interference characteristics and decodes the feedback information encoded in the accessing signals. In one embodiment, the feedback information includes, but is not limited to, downlink channel and noise-plus-interference characteristics under omni-directional transmission and the data rate requests and other QoS requirements of accessing subscribers. Such information, along with that for ongoing subscribers
- 10 stored in the traffic channel register and broadband channel information storage 606, as forwarded to joint traffic channel allocator 605A for channel assignment. The results are coded into feedback message signals by feedback signal generator 605B. The feedback signals intended for accessing subscriber, and a portion or all ongoing subscribers, are mixed with
- 15

downlink data streams for data designated for other subscribers from the downlink data streams interface 608 and modulated using OFDM modulator 607. The mixing may occur prior to OFDM modulator 607 using a mixing. The modulated OFDM signal is up-converted by RF transmitter(s) 609B and

5 transmitted through antenna (array) 609A.

In one embodiment, a sounding signal generator 630 is also included in the base-station Figure 6.

Uplink and Downlink Broadband Spatial Channel Estimation

10 Spatial processing (e.g., beamforming) using multiple antennas is among the most efficient ways to combat interference in wireless communications. When combined properly with joint traffic loading, uplink and downlink beamforming can significantly increase the capacity of an OFDMA network. To achieve such a gain, however, it is essential that the

15 base-station has knowledge of “broadband” uplink and downlink spatial channel characteristics before performing spatially selective beamforming.

Before a link is established for a subscriber, the location or the spatial channel of the subscriber is unknown to the base-station, sounding signals can be broadcast omni-directionally from the base-station. Once the location

of a subscriber has been determined, then the base-station may use beamforming to communicate with the subscriber. The difference between an omni-directional beam pattern and a spatial selective beam pattern is illustrated in Figure 7. Referring to Figure 7, an omni-directional sounding

5 signal beam pattern 701 is shown being broadcast from base-station antenna array 710. Once target subscriber 712 communicates with the base-station, the base-station, using spatially selective beamforming beam pattern 702, which is created in a manner well-known in the art, may determine the channel characteristics and communicate thereafter with subscriber 712

10 (using beamforming). For this reason, OFDMA traffic channel conditions determined at the subscriber based on sounding signals does not reflect the actual traffic channel conditions if downlink beamforming is performed. In other words, a “bad” downlink traffic channel for omni-directional sounding signals may very well be a “good” channel for real data traffic

15 with downlink beamforming.

In one embodiment, a base-station determines the downlink traffic channel conditions under spatial beamforming. Such a base-station may perform the following operations. First, a standby subscriber listens to the

omni-directional sounding signal and determines the signal to noise-plus-interference ratio for each of the OFDMA traffic channels:

$$\text{SINR}_i, i=1, \dots, K,$$

where SINR_i is the signal to noise-plus-interference ratio on the i th traffic

5 channel, and K is the total number of traffic channels allowed by the base-station.

Once paged or when the standby subscriber has packets to transmit, the subscriber sends back the measured SINR information to the base-station through one of the access channels. A broadband spatial channel estimator at

10 the base-station estimates the uplink spatial channels:

$$(a_{1i}, a_{2i}, \dots, a_{Mi}), i=1, \dots, K$$

where a_{mi} is the antenna response of the i th traffic channel from the m th antenna, M is the total number of antenna elements.

Based on the spatial channel estimated, the base-station predicts the
 15 “additional” spatial gain of beamforming over omni-directional transmission as, for example,

$$G_i = 10 \log 10 (|a_{1i}|^2 + |a_{2i}|^2 + \dots + |a_{Mi}|^2) / |a_{1i} + a_{2i} + \dots + a_{Mi}|^2 [\text{dB}], i=1, \dots, K.$$

Many other approaches can be used to estimate the spatial processing gains over omni-directional transmission. Once G_i is calculated, the expected SINR_i over traffic channel i with downlink beamforming can be determined as

$$5 \quad \text{SINR}_{i,\text{new}} = \text{SINR}_i + G_i, \quad i=1, \dots, K$$

The above information is used by the traffic channel allocator of the base-station to determine a channel assignment.

Figure 8 illustrates and frame structure of a time-division duplex network where the above operations are performed before traffic channel assignment. Referring to Figure 8, initially, omni-directional sounding signals are transmitted from the base-station (801). Downlink data streams are delivered in a spatially selectively fashion to ongoing subscribers using downlink beamforming (802). Thus, a portion of the downstream traffic (e.g., 5%, 10%, etc.) is dedicated to the transfer of information to facilitate the channel allocation process for new subscribers. Accessing subscribers listen to the sounding signal and send back the measured SINR_i of all available traffic channels through a dedicated access channel drawing a random access time period (803). The base-station estimates, based on the accessing signal and feedback SINR information, e.g., the SINR for accessing

subscribers with downlink beamforming. After rate negotiation and initial hand-shaking, the accessing subscribers are assigned traffic channels through which data streams are transmitted with uplink and downlink beamforming. The uplink transfer of information (804) represents the

5 remaining portion of the uplink time window.

Protocols for Multiple Base-stations

One application of joint traffic channel assignment is multi-cell OFDMA networks. In such setup, the network capacity can benefit

10 significantly from dynamic loading/adaptive modulation that increases, and potentially maximizes, the throughput in any given situation. Essentially, multiple cells can share the overall spectral resources and provide “on-demand” traffic channel allocation in a dynamic network.

To enable joint multi-cell traffic channel allocation, the base-station

15 within each cell performs uplink and downlink traffic channel estimation using the protocols and schemes described above. In addition, as illustrated in Figure 9, neighboring base-stations exchange such information through the base-station controller, or dedicated links between base-stations. Traffic channel conditions, assignment tables, as well as QoS requirements of all

accessing subscribers of neighboring cells, may be accounted for in performing traffic channel assignment. For example, if two base stations know two subscribers near to each other in different cells can be allocated any of channels 1-10 (there are channels with high gain for these

5 subscribers), then one base station may allocate channels 1-5 to its subscriber and the other base station may allocate channels 6-10 to its subscriber.

Whereas many alterations and modifications of the present invention will no doubt become apparent to a person of ordinary skill in the art after having read the foregoing description, it is to be understood that any

10 particular embodiment shown and described by way of illustration is in no way intended to be considered limiting. Therefore, references to details of various embodiments are not intended to limit the scope of the claims which in themselves recite only those features regarded as essential to the invention.

CLAIMS

We claim:

- 1 1. A cellular network comprising:
 - 2 a plurality of subscribers communicating with the base station using
 - 3 orthogonal frequency division multiple access (OFDMA);
 - 4 at least one base station having logic to coordinate multiple-access
 - 5 and information exchange between the at least one base station and the
 - 6 plurality of subscribers, the logic selecting a set of OFDMA traffic channels
 - 7 from a plurality of candidate OFDMA traffic channels based on feedback
 - 8 channel information collected from the plurality of subscribers.
- 1 2. The network defined in Claim 1 wherein the logic calculates
- 2 spatial gains of uplink and downlink channels based on responses of
- 3 spatially separated receivers at the base station.
- 1 3. The network defined in Claim 1 wherein the feedback
- 2 information comprises channel fading information and noise and
- 3 interference levels for each of the plurality of candidate OFDMA traffic
- 4 channels.

1 4. The network defined in Claim 1 wherein the plurality of
2 subscribers send the feedback information in response to a sounding signal
3 from the at least one base station.

1 5. The network defined in Claim 1 wherein the at least one base
2 station selects a combination of modulation and coding schemes based on
3 the SINR of the selected traffic channel for each accessing subscriber.

1 6. The network defined in Claim 1 wherein the logic comprises
2 medium access control (MAC) logic.

1 7. A method comprising:
2 sending sounding signals to a plurality of subscribers;
3 receiving channel condition information for a plurality of OFDMA
4 traffic channels; and
5 performing OFDMA multi-user traffic channel assignment to assign
6 traffic channels from the plurality of OFDMA traffic channels to the plurality
7 of subscribers based on the channel condition information and estimated
8 spatial gains for the uplink and downlink signals.

1 8. The method defined in Claim 7 wherein the channel condition
2 information comprises information regarding estimated channel gains and
3 channel interference for the plurality of OFDMA traffic channels.

1 9. The method defined in Claim 7 wherein performing traffic
2 channel assignment is based on channel conditions between one or more
3 antennas at a base station and one or more antennas at subscriber locations.

1 10. The method defined in Claim 7 further comprising estimating
2 spatial gains for uplink and downlink signals.

1 11. The method defined in Claim 10 further comprising estimating
2 signal-to-noise-plus-interference rates (SINRs) for the uplink and downlink
3 signals, and wherein performing channel assignment is based on the SINRs
4 for the uplink and downlink signals.

1 12. The method defined in Claim 11 wherein estimating SINRs for
2 the uplink and downlink signals is performed on all OFDMA traffic
3 channels for all active and accessing subscribers.

1 13. The method defined in Claim 11 wherein performing channel
2 assignment is based on quality of service (QoS) requirements.

1 14. The method defined in Claim 13 wherein the QoS
2 requirements include one or more of the following: data rate, time-out, bit
3 error rate, and writing time.

1 15. The method defined in Claim 13 wherein performing channel
2 assignment is based on priority.

1 16. The method defined in Claim 7 further comprising
2 determining a combination of coding and modulation schemes when
3 performing channel assignments.

1 17. The method defined in Claim 7 wherein performing traffic
2 channel assignments comprises a plurality of base stations coordinating to
3 perform the traffic channel assignment.

1 18. The method defined in Claim 17 wherein each of the plurality
2 of base stations is within a cell and estimates SINRs for uplink and downlink
3 signals across all OFDMA traffic channels for accessing subscribers

1 19. The method defined in Claim 18 when the plurality of base
2 stations perform estimates for active and accessing subscribers.

1 20. The method defined in Claim 7 wherein the sounding signal is
2 omni-directional.

- 1 21. The method defined in Claim 7 wherein estimating spatial
- 2 gains for uplink and downlink signals comprises:
 - 3 estimating broadband spatial channels across the plurality of OFDMA
 - 4 traffic channels for each accessing subscriber;
 - 5 determining the spatial processing gains for uplink and downlink
 - 6 signals on each of the plurality of OFDMA traffic channels;
 - 7 predicting signal-to-noise-plus-interference ratio (SINR) for uplink
 - 8 and downlink transmission with spatial processing over each of available

9 OFDMA traffic channels by adding the spatial processing gain to downlink
10 signal strength feedback from one or more subscribers.

1 22. A method comprising:
2 receiving channel characteristics and noise-plus-interference
3 information measured at spatially distributed subscribers; and
4 assigning traffic channels for an orthogonal frequency-division
5 multiple-access (OFDMA) network.

1 23. The method defined in Claim 22 wherein assigning traffic
2 channels is performed for the OFDMA network that uses spatial
3 multiplexing.

1 24. A method comprising:
2 each of a plurality of subscribers estimating channel gains and noise-
3 plus-interference levels of a set of OFDMA traffic channels in response to a
4 sounding signal;
5 the plurality of subscribers transmitting to a base station measured
6 channel and noise-plus-interference information;

7 at least one of the plurality of subscribers transmitting packets using
8 one or more allocated OFDMA traffic channels.

1 25. The method defined in Claim 24 wherein the plurality of
2 subscribers transmit the measured channel and noise-plus-interference
3 information on pre-allocated channels.

1 26. The method defined in Claim 24 wherein the plurality of
2 subscribers transmits the measured channel and noise-plus-interference
3 information when paged or when one or more of the plurality of subscribers
4 have a packet to transmit to the base station.

1 27. An apparatus comprising:
2 a channel and noise-plus-interference estimator;
3 an access signal generator coupled to the estimator;
4 an OFDM modem coupled to the generator.

1 28. The apparatus defined in Claim 27 wherein the estimator
2 estimates channel gains and noise-plus-interference levels in a pre-
3 determined set of traffic channels.

1 29. The apparatus defined in Claim 28 wherein the generator
2 encodes channel and noise-plus-interference information to form an access
3 signal.

1 30. The apparatus defined in Claim 29 wherein the OFDM modem
2 modulates the access signal and transmits a modulated version of the access
3 signal through an access channel.

1 31. The apparatus defined in Claim 30 wherein the access channel
2 comprises at least a subset of all traffic channels during an access time slot.

1 32. An apparatus comprising:
2 at least one spatially separated transceiver;
3 an access signal detector and demodulator coupled to the at least one
4 spatially separated transceivers;

5 a spatial channel and spatial gain estimator;

6 an uplink and downlink signal-to-noise-plus-interference estimator;

7 a multi-user traffic channel allocator coupled to the calculator, and

8 the estimator; and

9 an OFDM modem coupled to the allocator.

1 33. The apparatus defined in Claim 32 wherein the allocator

2 determines traffic channel assignment and a code and modulation

3 combination for each accessing subscriber, and the OFDM modem

4 modulates the traffic channel assignment and transmits a modulated version

5 of the traffic channel assignment to at least one subscriber.

1 34. The apparatus defined in Claim 33 wherein the allocator

2 determines traffic channel assignment based on broadband spatial channel

3 estimates from the estimator and measured channel and noise-plus-

4 interference information feedback from subscribers.

1 35. The apparatus defined in Claim 34 wherein the broadband
2 spatial channel estimates comprise the broadband spatial channel between a
3 base station and each accessing subscriber.

1 36. The apparatus defined in 34 wherein the access signal detector
2 and demodulator detects access signals transmitted by subscribers and
3 demodulates the measured channel and noise-plus-interference information
4 feedback from subscribers.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method and apparatus for controlling OFDMA cellular networks is described. In one embodiment, the method comprises receiving channel characteristics and noise-plus-interference information measured at spatially distributed subscribers and assigning traffic channels for an orthogonal frequency-division multiple-access (OFDMA) network.

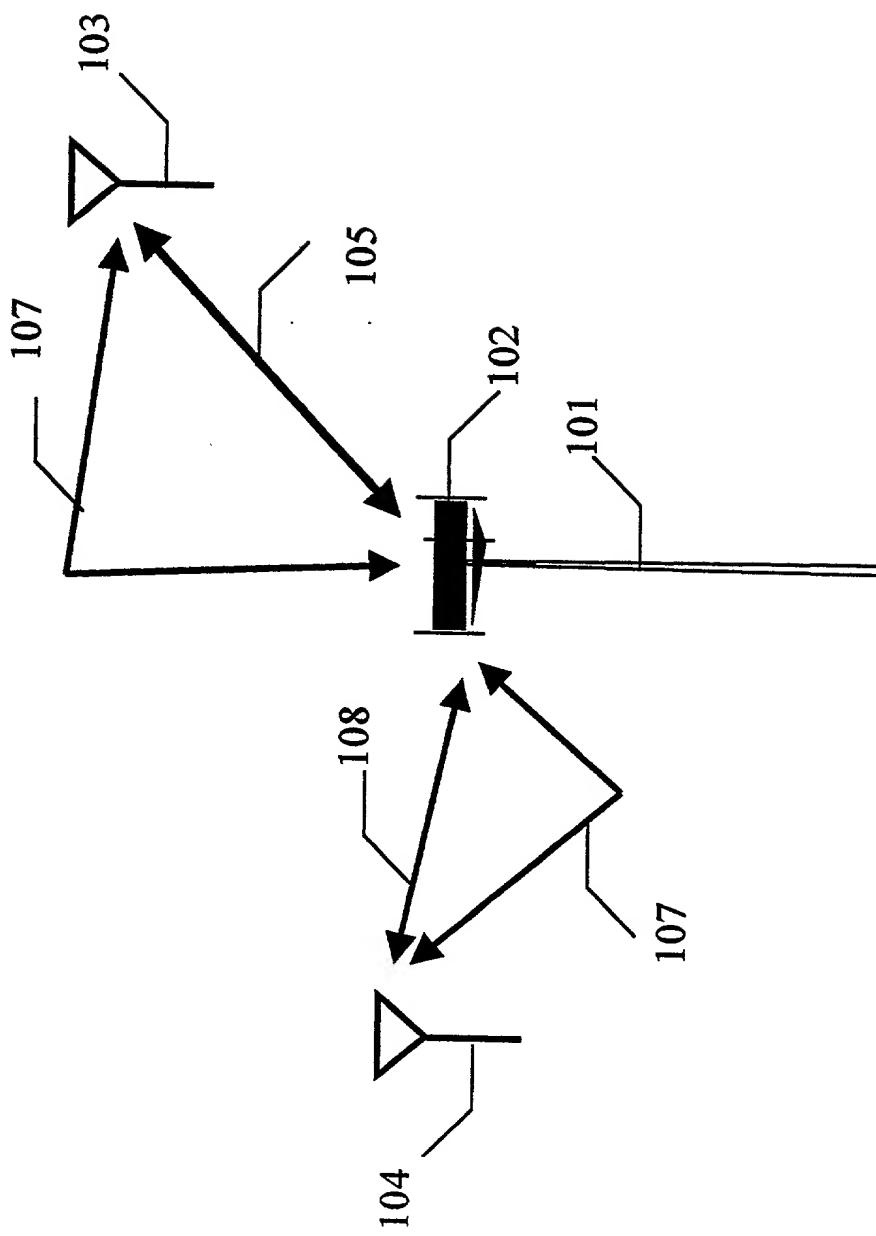
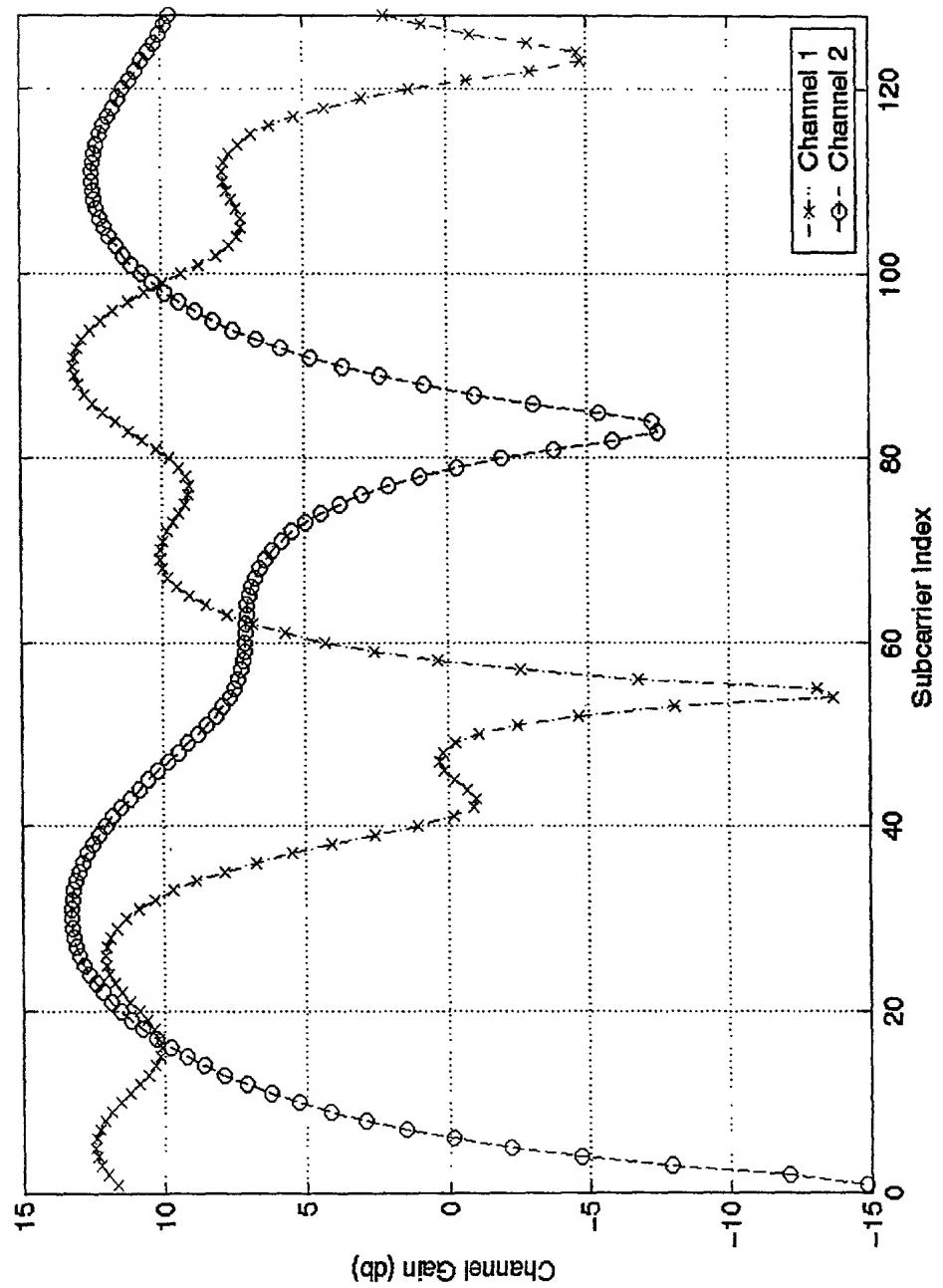
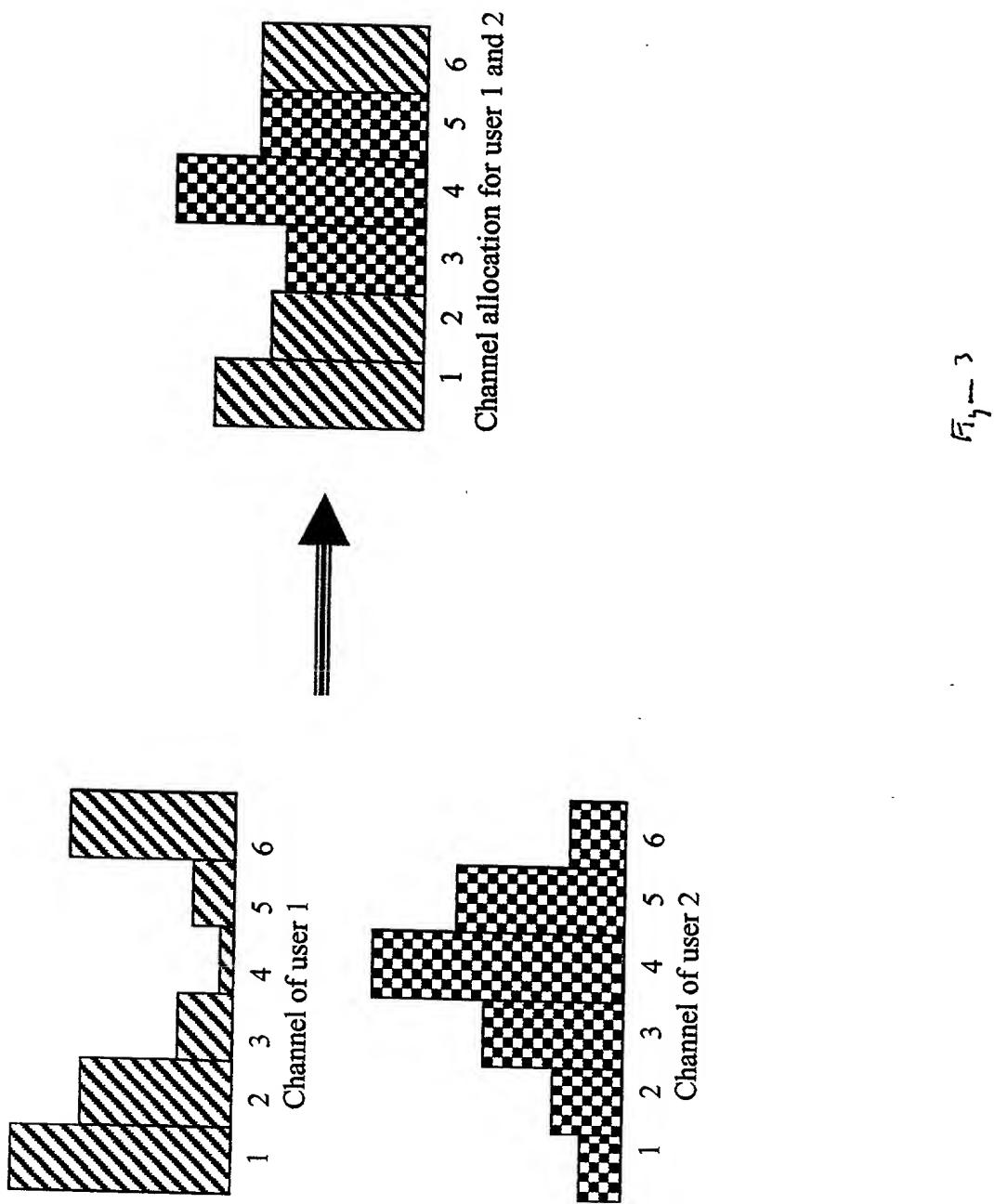


Fig. 1





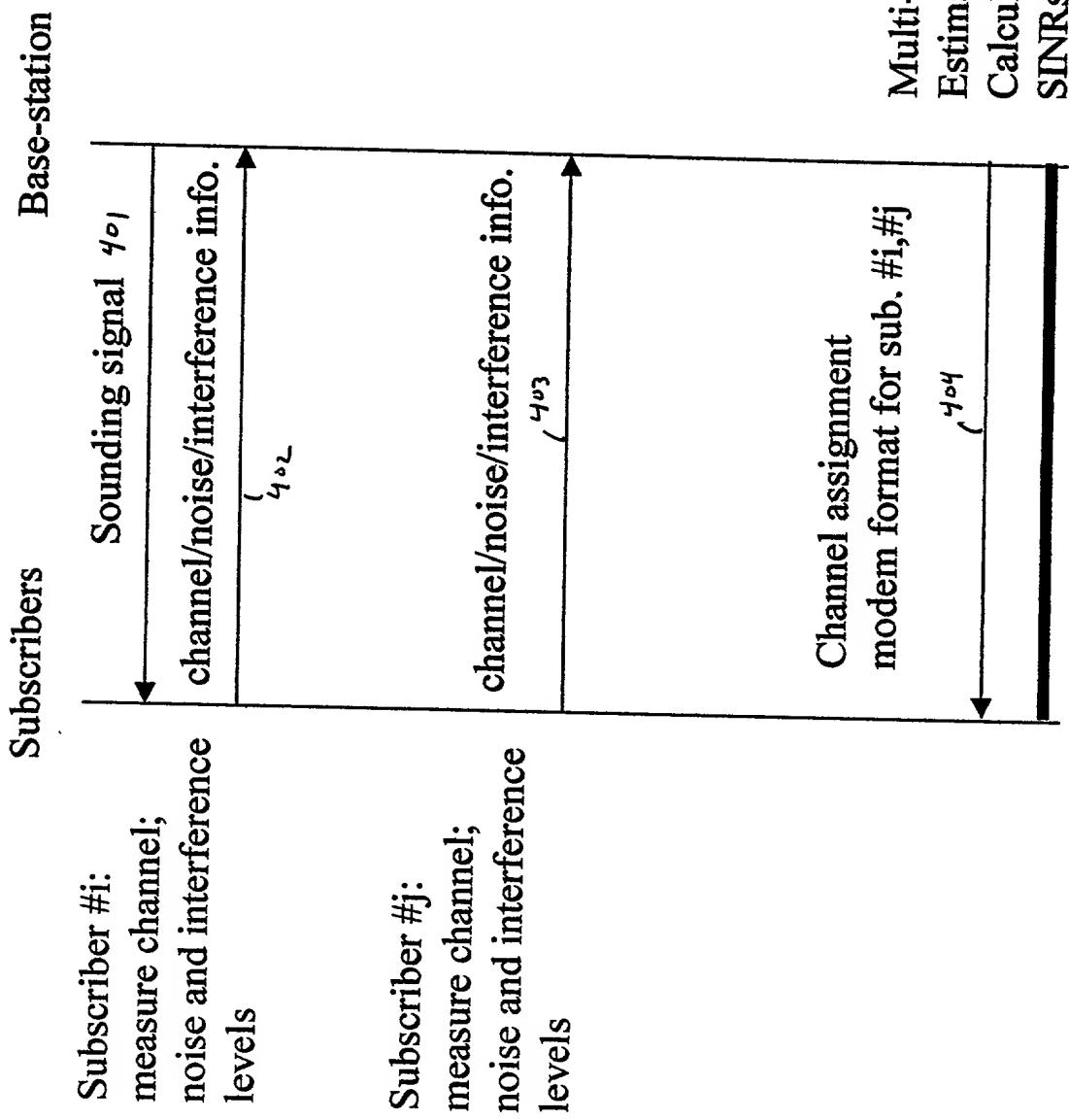


Figure 4

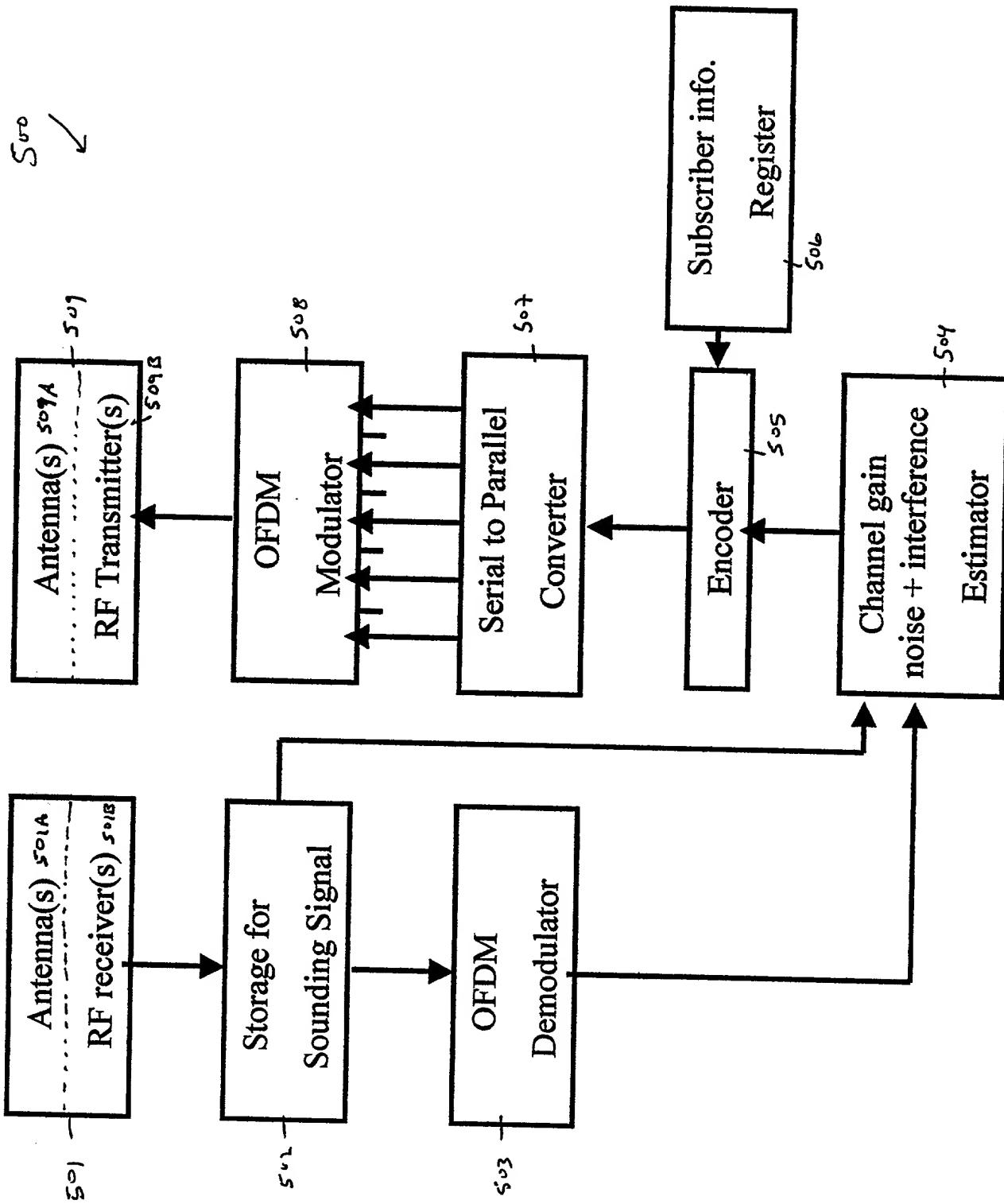


Figure 5

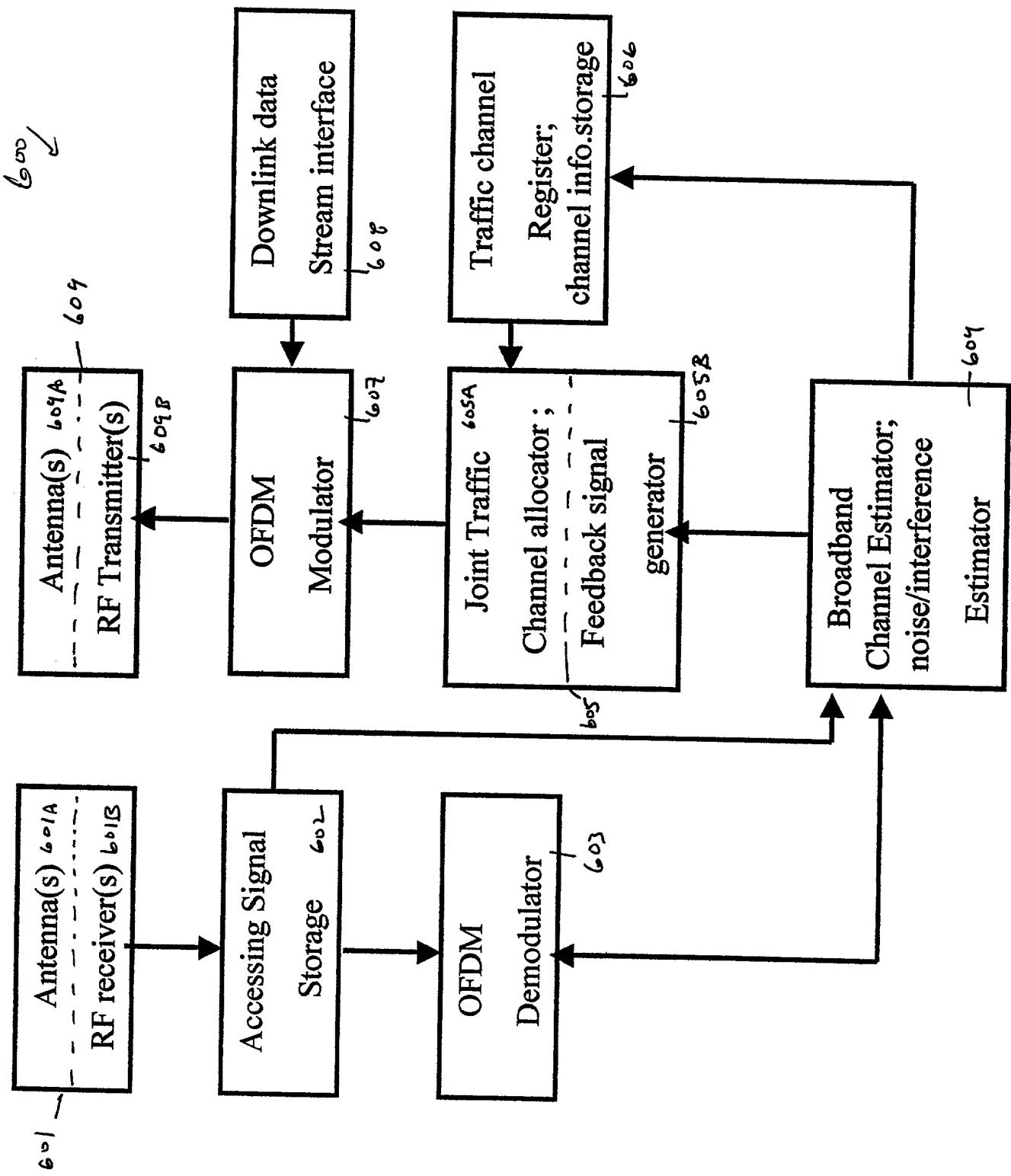


Fig. 6

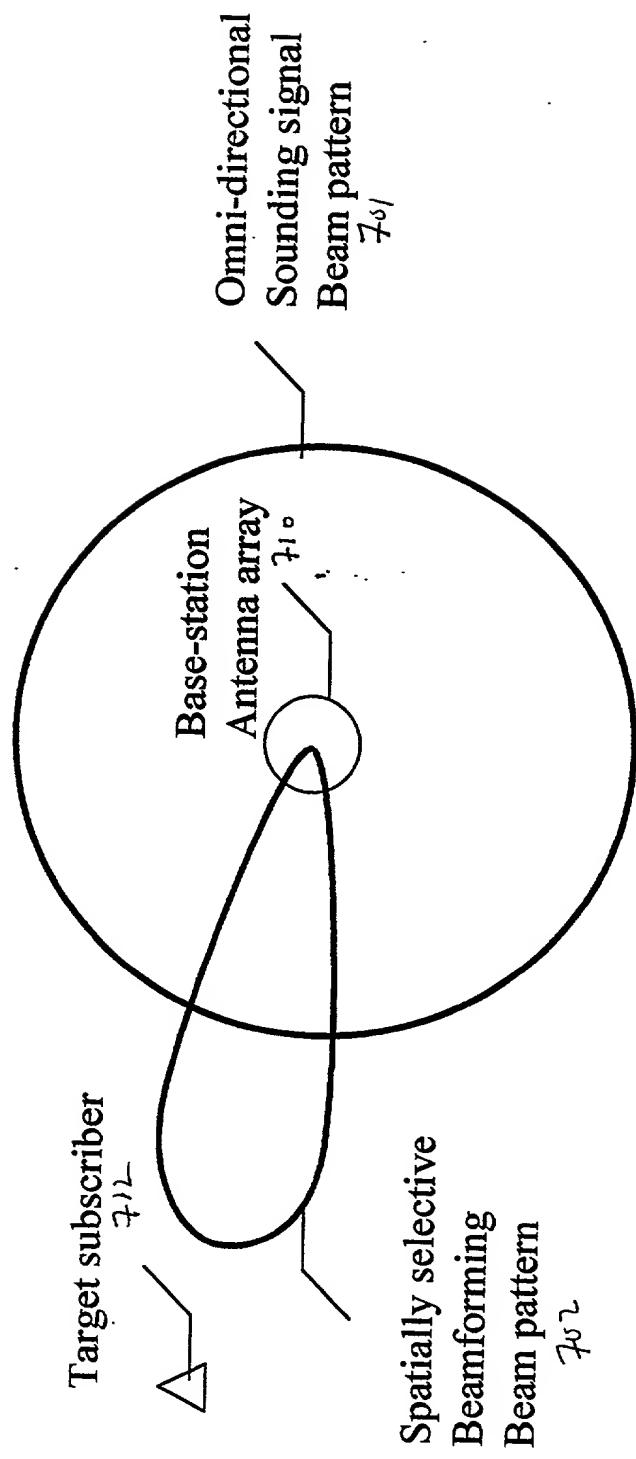


Figure 7

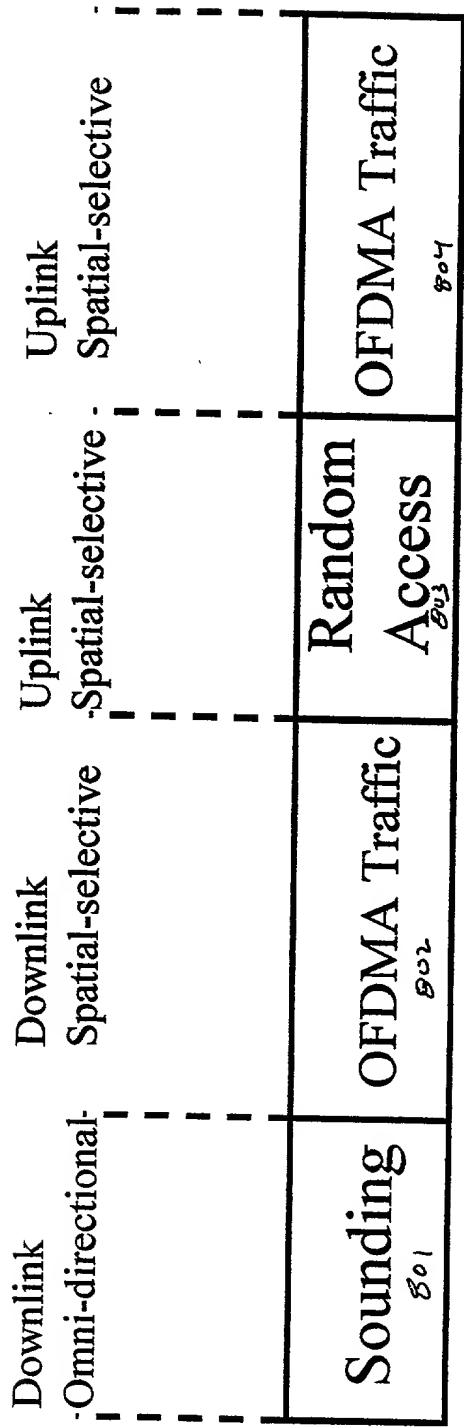


Figure 8

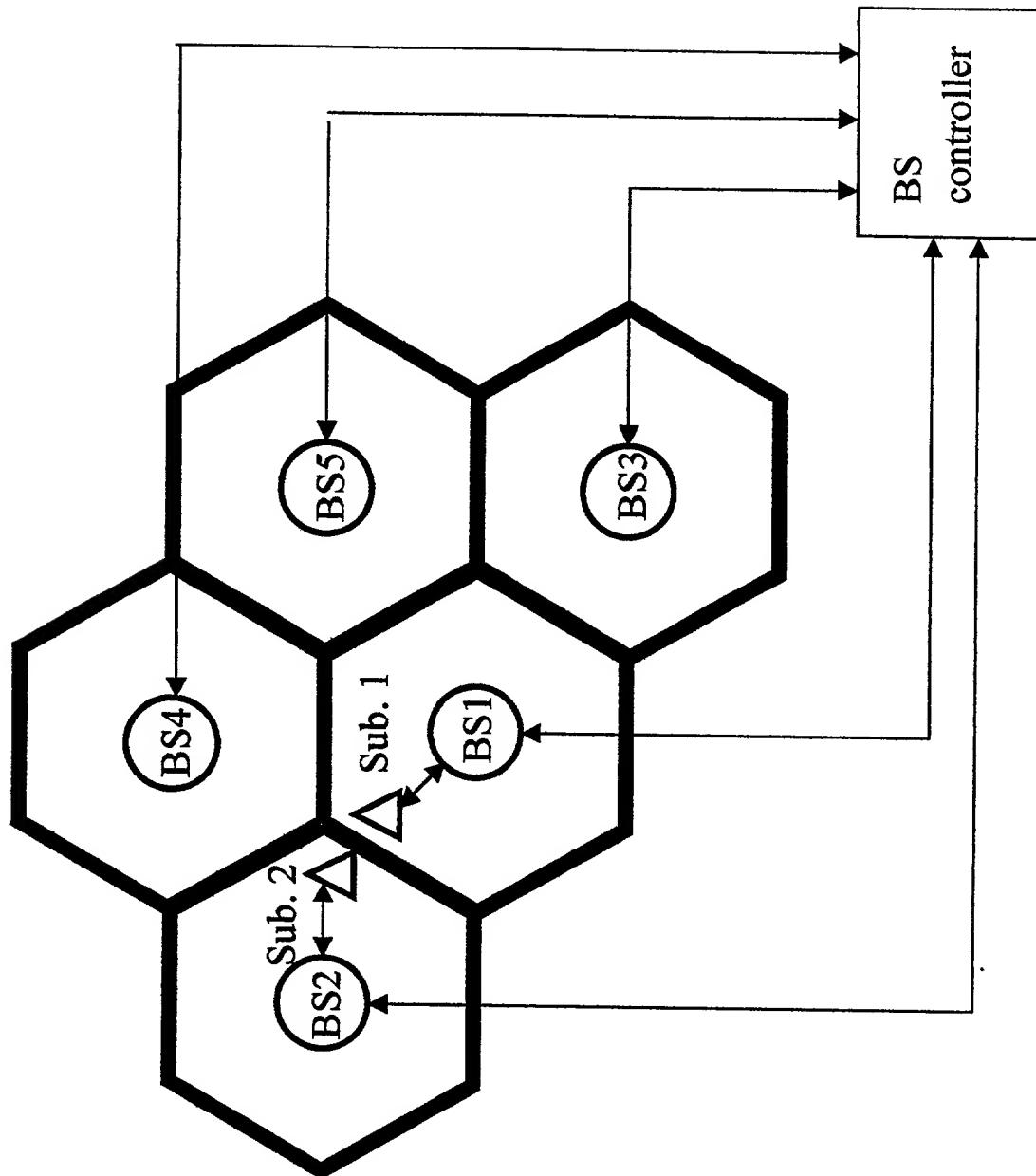


Figure 9

DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR PATENT APPLICATION

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below, next to my name.

I believe I am the original, first, and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first, and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled

MEDIUM ACCES CONTROL FOR ORTHOGONAL FREQUENCY-DIVISION MULTIPLE-ACCESS
(OFDMA) CELLULAR NETWORKS

the specification of which

X is attached hereto.
— was filed on (MM/DD/YYYY) _____ as
United States Application Number _____
or PCT International Application Number _____
and was amended on (MM/DD/YYYY) _____.
(if applicable)

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claim(s), as amended by any amendment referred to above. I do not know and do not believe that the claimed invention was ever known or used in the United States of America before my invention thereof, or patented or described in any printed publication in any country before my invention thereof or more than one year prior to this application, that the same was not in public use or on sale in the United States of America more than one year prior to this application, and that the invention has not been patented or made the subject of an inventor's certificate issued before the date of this application in any country foreign to the United States of America on an application filed by me or my legal representatives or assigns more than twelve months (for a utility patent application) or six months (for a design patent application) prior to this application.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose all information known to me to be material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.56.

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code, Section 119(a)-(d), of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate listed below and have also identified below any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed:

Prior Foreign Application(s)

Priority
Claimed

(Number)	(Country)	(Foreign Filing Date - MM/DD/YYYY)	Yes	No

I hereby claim the benefit under title 35, United States Code, Section 119(e) of any United States provisional application(s) listed below:

(Application Number) (Filing Date – MM/DD/YYYY)

(Application Number) (Filing Date – MM/DD/YYYY)

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, Section 120 of any United States application(s) listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Code, Section 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose all information known to me to be material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of this application:

(Application Number) (Filing Date – MM/DD/YYYY) (Status -- patented,
pending, abandoned)

(Application Number) (Filing Date – MM/DD/YYYY) (Status -- patented,
pending, abandoned)

I hereby appoint the persons listed on Appendix A hereto (which is incorporated by reference and a part of this document) as my respective patent attorneys and patent agents, with full power of substitution and revocation, to prosecute this application and to transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected herewith.

Send correspondence to Michael J. Mallie, BLAKELY, SOKOLOFF, TAYLOR &
(Name of Attorney or Agent)
ZAFMAN LLP, 12400 Wilshire Boulevard 7th Floor, Los Angeles, California 90025 and direct
telephone calls to Michael J. Mallie, (408) 720-8300.
(Name of Attorney or Agent)

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

Full Name of Sole/First Inventor Hui Liu

Inventor's Signature _____ Date _____

Residence _____ Citizenship _____
(City, State) (Country)

Post Office Address _____

Full Name of Second/Joint Inventor Xiaodong Li

Inventor's Signature _____ Date _____

Residence _____ Citizenship _____
(City, State) (Country)

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Full Name of Third/Joint Inventor Fuqi Mu

Inventor's Signature _____ Date _____

Residence _____ Citizenship _____
(City, State) (Country)

Post Office Address _____

Full Name of Fourth/Joint Inventor _____

Inventor's Signature _____ Date _____

Residence _____ Citizenship _____
(City, State) (Country)

Post Office Address _____

APPENDIX A

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APPENDIX B

Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.56 Duty to Disclose Information Material to Patentability

(a) A patent by its very nature is affected with a public interest. The public interest is best served, and the most effective patent examination occurs when, at the time an application is being examined, the Office is aware of and evaluates the teachings of all information material to patentability. Each individual associated with the filing and prosecution of a patent application has a duty of candor and good faith in dealing with the Office, which includes a duty to disclose to the Office all information known to that individual to be material to patentability as defined in this section. The duty to disclosure information exists with respect to each pending claim until the claim is cancelled or withdrawn from consideration, or the application becomes abandoned. Information material to the patentability of a claim that is cancelled or withdrawn from consideration need not be submitted if the information is not material to the patentability of any claim remaining under consideration in the application. There is no duty to submit information which is not material to the patentability of any existing claim. The duty to disclosure all information known to be material to patentability is deemed to be satisfied if all information known to be material to patentability of any claim issued in a patent was cited by the Office or submitted to the Office in the manner prescribed by §§1.97(b)-(d) and 1.98. However, no patent will be granted on an application in connection with which fraud on the Office was practiced or attempted or the duty of disclosure was violated through bad faith or intentional misconduct. The Office encourages applicants to carefully examine:

(1) Prior art cited in search reports of a foreign patent office in a counterpart application, and

(2) The closest information over which individuals associated with the filing or prosecution of a patent application believe any pending claim patentably defines, to make sure that any material information contained therein is disclosed to the Office.

(b) Under this section, information is material to patentability when it is not cumulative to information already of record or being made or record in the application, and

(1) It establishes, by itself or in combination with other information, a prima facie case of unpatentability of a claim; or

(2) It refutes, or is inconsistent with, a position the applicant takes in:

(i) Opposing an argument of unpatentability relied on by the Office, or

(ii) Asserting an argument of patentability.

A prima facie case of unpatentability is established when the information compels a conclusion that a claim is unpatentable under the preponderance of evidence, burden-of-proof standard, giving each term in the claim its broadest reasonable construction consistent with the specification, and before any consideration is given to evidence which may be submitted in an attempt to establish a contrary conclusion of patentability.

(c) Individuals associated with the filing or prosecution of a patent application within the meaning of this section are:

(1) Each inventor named in the application;

(2) Each attorney or agent who prepares or prosecutes the application; and

(3) Every other person who is substantively involved in the preparation or prosecution of the application and who is associated with the inventor, with the assignee or with anyone to whom there is an obligation to assign the application.

(d) Individuals other than the attorney, agent or inventor may comply with this section by disclosing information to the attorney, agent, or inventor.